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Did Oswald Have Help? New Book Raises Issue

By Peter Kihss
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A declassified Federal Bureau of Investigation report is being used to support new challenges to the Warren Commission report that contended Lee Harvey Oswald was the lone assassin of President John F. Kennedy.

J. Lee Rankin, the commission's former general counsel, and Norman Redlich, who was his deputy, rebut the so-called "FBI summary report" as already evaluated and discarded during the inquiry. They contend the inquiry headed by Chief Justice Earl Warren relied on more direct and expert testimony.

The issue is whether a single bullet passed through President Kennedy's body and then wounded Gov. John B. Connally Jr. of Texas. The critics suggest it had to be a separate bullet that wounded the governor, with the firing time for Oswald's bolt-action rifle was such that there had to be a second assassin also firing.

The commission's report was that three shots apparently were fired. It found "very persuasive evidence" that the first bullet to hit the President also wounded Connally, and said a later bullet inflicted a massive, fatal head wound on the President. One shot, it said, "probably missed," with evidence "inconclusive" on whether this was the first, second or third.

Viking Press will publish on June 29, 15,000 copies of a book evolved from a Cornell University master's thesis, "Inquest," by Edward Jay Epstein, including36 pages of the FBI report.

Holt, Rinehart & Winston is circulating a brochure on its plan to publish 30,000 copies on Sept. 8 of a book, "Rush to Judgment," by Mark Lane, for a time counsel retained by Oswald's mother.

The FBI report is also being cited in a photo - offset book, "Whitewash," published personally in Hyattstown, Md., by its author, Harold Weisberg, former Senate Civil Liberties Subcommittee investigator.

The FBI has declined comment. But Rankin, now New York City's corporation counsel, says he is "well satisfied that no valid attack has yet been made" on the commission report.